

Frequently Asked Questions: the final three months of Bar/Bat Mitzvah planning

Rehearsals

Q: What is the schedule for Bar/Bat Mitzvah Rehearsals?

- Approximately 3 weeks prior to your child's Bar/Bat Mitzvah, your child will rehearse with Cantor Doob in the Sanctuary. Parents are welcome but not required to attend this rehearsal.
- Approximately 10 days before the Bar/Bat Mitzvah, your child will rehearse with Rabbi Perlman. Again, parents are welcome but do not need to attend.
- The final rehearsal with Rabbi Jaffe is a few days before the actual service, usually on Thursday. This is a complete run-through of the service and parents are expected to attend. Rabbi Jaffe will review and explain the procedures for the service, and you will have an opportunity to ask questions.

Q: What should we bring to the rehearsals?

Your child should bring his/her Siddur (prayerbook), Torah portion, Haftarah and d'var Torah (his/her speech) to **all rehearsals**. Please also bring a copy of the completed Aliyot sheet to the **final rehearsal**.

Honors to be assigned in advance

Who can be called for an Aliyah to the Torah at Temple Isaiah?

Anyone who has reached the age of 13 and is Jewish can be called for an Aliyah (blessings before and after the reading of the Torah). A parent, other family member or friend who is not Jewish can accompany a Jewish participant who is being called for the Aliyah. You may have two people recite the blessing at the same time, or, if circumstances genuinely demand it, three.

How do we prepare to chant the Aliyah Blessings?

There are two blessings that each person or persons called to the Torah will recite or chant, one before the Torah reading and one after. A copy of the blessing and a digital sound file of the Torah Blessings can be found on the Temple Isaiah website:

www.templeisaiah.net/bnaimitzvah.aspx

What other honors can be given out for the bar/bat mitzvah service?

Each family can select two people to open and close the ark when the Torah is brought out of the ark and two other people to open and close the ark when the Torah is returned to the ark. Upon request, it may also be possible to invite one person to lift the Torah (Hagbah) and/or one person to dress the Torah (G'lilah). If you are interested in assigning these honors be certain to discuss this with one of the rabbis or the cantor.

What information do I need in advance to fill out the Aliyah Form?

When a person is called up to the Torah for an Aliyah he or she is called up by his/her Hebrew name followed by his/her parents' Hebrew names. For each person given an Aliyah (including the bar/bat mitzvah child) we will need the Hebrew first name of the person being called up, and the Hebrew first name of that person's mother and father. To submit this form electronically go to the temple Isaiah website:

www.templeisaiah.net/bnaimitzvah.aspx

Q: Do we need ushers?

Yes. Please honor one or two guests who are members of Temple Isaiah to be ushers for the service. Their job is to welcome guests, monitor the sanctuary, help late comers get seated and distribute prayerbooks, kippot and/or programs. The ushers should also sit near and monitor the younger guests to ensure they participate quietly.

Other Advance Details**Q: When does the Temple need to know our final numbers?**

Please call the Temple Office one week before the Bar/Bat Mitzvah with the final number of guests so the appropriate number of chairs are set-up.

Q: Do I need to recontact the vendors who will be working at the reception?

A week before your child's Bar/Bat Mitzvah, you should check in with each of the vendors whom you have hired (i.e. caterers, photographers, musicians, etc.) to be sure that they have directions to the Temple and/or to your reception venue.

Q: Can we film the service?

The Temple has a stationary video system capable of capturing the Bar/Bat Mitzvah on DVD, a copy of which can be arranged for a reasonable fee through the Temple Office. You will receive a release form to sign, noting your desire to have the occasion recorded.

Q: Should I hire babysitters for the service?

Remember that this is your child's day. It is not always appropriate for little children to be in the sanctuary. If you are inviting young children, please arrange for a baby-sitter, and inform their parents that childcare is available. Please contact the Temple Isaiah office in advance to reserve a classroom for babysitting. You can also request that the custodian place a DVD/VCR player in the room. You will need to provide any DVD's, videos and/or toys for the children to play with and please make sure that all items are cleaned up after use. If anyone with little children will be sitting with their child in the sanctuary, please have the usher(s) seat them near the doors.

Q: What can my friends and family do to help?

- Bake or shop for your Oneg (refreshments served after Friday night services).
- Help you and your child put together tzedakah centerpieces or collections.
- Help you put together a program together (if you choose to make a program).
- If there are leftovers from the Oneg, ask a friend to bring them to your car or to the refrigerators in the temple kitchen.
- If you plan to bring your Bima flowers to your child's reception, then after the service, have a friend bring the Bima flowers to your car.
- If you are leaving the Temple after the service to go to another facility for a reception, then ask a friend to be responsible for making sure that all of the kids are accounted for and make it on to the bus or into their carpools. If you are hiring a bus, then make sure that there is an adult on the bus with the kids, and that all of the kids are on the bus.

Erev Shabbat Services (Friday night)

Q: What is the role of the bar/bat mitzvah family(ies) at the Friday night service?

Your family will lead the congregation in the blessings over the candles and the blessings over the wine (the Kiddush) at the beginning of the Friday night service. It is a wonderful way to put all of the logistics and planning aside and get into the Bar/Bat Mitzvah spirit!

Please plan to arrive no later than 15 minutes prior to the service start.

Q: I have heard that we need to provide the food for the Friday night oneg. Why? What does this entail?

You are correct. In Jewish tradition, it is customary to include the congregation and honor the bar/bat mitzvah with a "celebratory meal." At Temple Isaiah we carry on this tradition by asking families to provide the following:

For 6:15 Services:

Your family is asked to provide four sliced challot and one unsliced challah. Please deliver them to the Temple by 12:00 noon on Friday.

For 8:00 Services:

Your family is asked to provide 250 pastries or 175 pastries plus fruit. This food needs to be delivered to the temple by Thursday evening or early Friday morning, depending on when the oneg coordinators are setting up for the service.

Q: Who does all of the baking for an 8:00 service?

The pastries can be baked, store bought, or a combination of the two. Many people ask their friends to bake/provide pastries which is a fun way for your friends to help you prepare and a great way to respond to "Is there anything I can do to help?" You may also want to pair up with a buddy in your child's grade to be in charge of each other's oneg preparation.

Q: How do we arrange for the Bima flowers?

The Bar/Bat Mitzvah family(ies) are invited to provide flowers to be placed in the front of the bima. Any arrangement should be no higher than the lectern (36" including the pot or vase). There is a silk flower arrangement provided by our Sisterhood that can be used for the Bima decoration as well. If you choose to use the silk arrangement, please let the temple office know in advance. **The Temple office closes at 2:00 p.m. on Friday, so flowers need to be delivered in the morning.**

Shabbat morning services (Saturday)

Q: What should we bring to the Saturday morning service?

- Your child should bring all of his/her materials (Siddur, Torah portion, Haftarah and d'var Torah (speech) to the service!!!
- Programs and Kippot/Yarmulkes if you choose to provide them
- Extra copies of directions if you are going to another facility for your reception.

Q: What is the schedule for Saturday morning:

9:00 am: (If you choose to have photographs taken before the service)

Please coordinate your photography schedule with the other family if this is a double bar/bat mitzvah. **Please note that photography is not permitted during the service.**

10:15-10:30 am: The rabbi is available to take out the Torah scroll and pose with your child on the Bima. All pictures must conclude by 10:30.

10:25 am: Please ask all your guests being honored with Aliyot to arrive at the Temple to meet with one of the rabbis so that they may be given instructions.

10:45am:The family is asked to join Rabbi Jaffe in his study. This is a wonderful break from the logistics of the day and an opportunity to enter into the Shabbat spirit for the service.

10:55 am:Guests should be seated in the Sanctuary by 10:55 so that the service can start on time.

11:00 am: The service will start promptly at 11:00 am.

Q: When does the service typically end?

When there is one student becoming Bar/Bat Mitzvah, services generally end at 12:45.

When there are two children becoming Bar/Bat Mitzvah, the service typically concludes between 1:00 and 1:10.

Q: My child has invited his/her classmates and many other friends. Should they all sit together?

It is a temple policy to seat your child's friends in the middle rows of the sanctuary.

Please designate as many rows as you think you will need for these guests. We have found that this seating arrangement ensures proper behavior, and gives your child the respect that he/she deserves.